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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 002837

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/27/2017
TAGS: [KJUS](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: PETRO DENOUNCES ATTEMPTED OFFICE SEARCH AND
ALLEGED THREATS

REF: BOGOTA 2593

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer.
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

11. (C) At a Senate hearing on April 24, leading opposition Polo Democratico Senator Gustavo Petro denounced an April 23 attempt by police to search his office for documents linked to an old espionage case involving a military officer. Prosecutor General Mario Iguaran conceded a low-level prosecutor made mistakes in ordering the judicial inspection of Petro's office. Petro also claimed he had uncovered a possible plan to kill him and damage the reputation of his Polo Party. Department of Administrative Security (DAS) director Andres Penate told Polcouns April 25 the DAS is committed to protecting Petro and his family. End summary.

Petro Denounces Attempted Search

12. (U) On April 24, Polo Senator Gustavo Petro used a Senate hearing to denounce an April 23 attempt by judicial police (SIJIN) to search his office for documents linked to a 2003 espionage case involving a former military officer accused of selling Colombian communication secrets to Venezuela. Petro had publicly denounced the officer in the past. Minister of Interior and Justice Carlos Holguin was at the hearing and called the attempted search an "outrage." Holguin subsequently clarified that what had occurred was a "judicial inspection," not a search. (Note: There is a distinction in the Colombian legal system between a search and a judicial inspection; the latter is done openly with advanced notification, while a search is done without any advance notice against a person accused of a criminal offense.)

13. (C) Petro told poloff on April 26 the attempted search was a "judicial inspection." He said the police did not enter the office or take any documents, after they were refused entry. Petro added that he was not sure whether

anyone in his office was given advance notice of the attempted search, adding that one of his security personnel "may" have been notified. Petro speculated that the inspection (which he said was authorized by the Fiscalía on March 15) was a GoC effort to obtain advance information about his April 17 Antioquia para-political debate, but the police, wary of interfering, delayed the attempt until after the debate (ref. A). The search, Petro said, was an "indicator" of GoC attitudes towards him.

¶4. (U) Prosecutor General Mario Iguaran conceded a lower-level prosecutor from the Counterterrorism Unit erred in ordering the judicial inspection. Iguaran said it was "unusual" that such an order would have been issued without informing supervisors, and reiterated that the Prosecutor General's Office was not investigating Petro. Iguaran noted that prosecutors were autonomous in their decisions and no action would be taken against the prosecutor. He said the request for the search had come from the Inspector General's Office.

¶5. (U) Petro also publicly claimed to have discovered a plot to kill him and to harm the reputation of the Polo Party. He said retired Army Colonel Julian Villate, who worked for the U.S. Embassy in Bogota as a local guard supervisor from December 2004 to July 2005, met with assassins in January to discuss plans to kill Petro. Petro also said the Medellin drug mafia is trying to plant evidence connecting the Polo to the FARC. Deputy Justice Minister Guillermo Reyes invited Petro to submit evidence to back his claims, and Fiscalía officials said they are investigating the charges.

¶6. (C) DAS Director Andres Penate told Polcouns April 27 the DAS is committed to ensuring the security of Petro and his family, and provides him with a security detail that includes some former M-19 guerrillas. Penate said he also met on April 25 with Polo President Carlos Gaviria to discuss increasing security for Gaviria, Petro and Polo Senator Robledo. Petro confirmed the Fiscalía is investigating his claims, and that the GoC had offered security. However, he claimed he preferred to use his own security detail, which he said was supported by the OAS.
Drucker